

novel as the best means of communication.
To tell me
that I must not do so is nonsense. I claim it
as my right,
and who are you to gainsay it?"

But let us pass to another point The oft-
repeated assertion
that Zola confined himself to portraying
the ulcers
and sores of life is contrary to fact. He
undoubtedly found
more evil than good in the community, and he
insisted on
the evil because it was that which needed
remedying. But
he blamed nobody for extolling the higher side
of life. He
denounced the writers who cast a deceptive
and often
poisonous glamour over the imperfections of
the world, he
railed at many of the people who pretended
to be very
good, for he was not deceived "by hypocrisy
and cant; but,
at the same time, he never held that mankind
was naturally
evil. He attributed its blemishes to its social
systems, its
superstitions, the thousand fallacies amid
which it was
reared, and his whole life was a battle with
those fallacies,
those superstitions, and those systems.

As he contended against so many generally
accepted
opinions it was inevitable that his work and
even his pur-
pose should be greatly misjudged. Critics took
in turn one
and another volume of his Rougon-Macquart
series, and pro-
nounced condemnation on it It was only when,
after long
years, the series was at last finished that some
little justice
was shown to the author. It should be
remembered that

no volume of the series is in itself a really complete work. The series indeed is the book, the volumes are but chapters of it. Besides, they ought not to be taken nowadays in the order in which they were originally published. It occasionally happens that writers are unable to produce their works in proper sequence. There have been instances